

The Battle Monument
North Calvert Street
at Fayette Street
Baltimore
Baltimore City County
Maryland

HABS No. MD-185

HABS

MD

4-BALT

113 -

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Division of Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

THE BATTLE MONUMENT

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Location: North Calvert Street at Fayette Street, Baltimore,
Baltimore City County, Maryland

Original and
Present Owner: The Mayor and City Council of Baltimore

Brief Statement
of Significance: The Battle Monument, begun September 12, 1815,
and completed in 1825, is the first significant
war memorial ever built in the United States.
It was designed by Maximilian Godefroy, who also
designed the St. Mary's Seminary Chapel (1806),
the Unitarian Church (1819), among other buildings
in Baltimore.

The use of Egyptian and Classical elements in the
design is unusual. The sculptured figure on the
top of the monument, the griffins, and the two
sculptured reliefs on the shaft are by Antonio
Capellano, and are among the oldest existing monu-
mental sculptures in the nation.

This monument is also the official emblem of the City
of Baltimore, having been adopted for the city seal
in 1827. It commemorates those who died in defending
the city from the British attack, September 12 to 14,
1814, the same attack which was the occasion for the
writing of the National Anthem.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. History:

The defense of Baltimore in 1814 was placed in the hands
of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety comprised of the City
Council and other distinguished citizens, with the Mayor as chair-
man. Large sums of money were voted by the City Council for their
pressing needs, and when the threat of British attack was over,
there remained in their hands \$5,869.29. Early in 1815 the Committee
proposed to erect a monument to the "memory of our brave but unfor-
tunate fellow citizens who fell in defence of this city..." and to
apply the unexpended funds of the Committee to this purpose, along
with other money which might be subscribed. This proposal was
printed in Niles Weekly Register, March 25, 1815, a copy of which
is included under Part I,C of this report.

In 1817 the City Council established "The Superintendents
of the Battle Monument" as a committee to continue the project. The

funds for construction came from three sources in approximately these amounts:

Committee of Vigilance and Safety	\$ 5,869.29
Subscriptions (at least)	10,795.50
Municipal appropriations (about)	13,900.00

The first two figures are reported in the report from the Committee of Vigilance and Safety of November 14, 1816, a copy of which is included under Part I,C of this report. (Baltimore City Archives, 1816, #558) It is interesting to note that four militia regiments contributed a thousand dollars each. I have seen documents that some, perhaps many, of the citizen soldiers who participated in the battles subscribed their military pay for the period they were under arms. Also, the members of the City Council on June 17, 1816, directed the Register to pay over to the monument committee "the amount of Per Diem now due them respectively as Members of the City Council of Baltimore." (Baltimore City Archives, 1816, #559)

In 1816 the City Council appropriated \$2,000, and in 1817 and 1822, \$3,000, and in 1825, \$4,000. A final appropriation of \$1,900 was made in the late 1820's, but some bills were paid after this out of general funds.

The existing bills for the monument total about \$25,000 but at least \$30,000 must have been spent from beginning to end.

Maximilian Godefroy offered gratuitously three designs for the monument, according to Niles Weekly Register, April 29, 1815, p. 158, a copy of which is included under Part I,C of this report. The Committee accepted the "Facial" (sic.). He was an obvious choice for architect, since he had served well in planning the defense of Fort McHenry. However, Godefroy was paid for superintending construction, receiving at least \$900 for his services. On March 22, 1815, he recommended the employment of John G. Neale, stonecutter, and Walter Athey, "an intelligent bricklayer," to the Committee, mainly because he felt confident in working with them. (Letter, this date, Maryland Historical Society, Godefroy to the Committee) Since he had already recommended Capellano to the building committee of St. Paul's Church, he probably was instrumental in getting him the monument job, too.

There were three stages in the building of the monument, although progress was essentially continuous. The first stage included the monument base and the podium, but not the cavetto cornice and sculptural parts. This part was essentially completed by October 16, 1816. (See document #558, Baltimore City Archives, copy of which is included under Part I,C of this report)

The second stage concerned the sculptural decoration by Antonio Capellano, which includes the cavetto cornice, the four griffins, the column, and the statue. The marble for these was

imported from Italy from G. C. Micali of Leghorn. In August, 1817, the chairman of the Committee, James A. Buchanan, contracted through the firm of Purviance, Nicholas & Co. with Micali for the marble, but there were delays, as explained in this letter from Micali of October 17, 1820:

"... you (Purviance) made a contract with me under date of the 21st of August 1817 by order of Mr. J. A. Buchanan ... for the execution of some marble works & among these the procuring of a Block of Marble for a Statue of the dimensions as contained in the (drawing?) of the architect Godefroi -- the enormous size of this Block being 600 Palms prevented the finding of an occasion by which it might be transported & your friends in America being advised of the circumstances Mr. Buchanan at the expiration of a year forwarded a model executed by Mr. Capellano with directions to reduce the size of the Block to such dimensions ..." (Baltimore City Archives, 1821, #1067 and 1070)

He included a bill for a "Block of Statuary Marble 600 Palms @3 crowns per palm Crs. 1200 expenses for reducing the same as per model 50" plus 257 Crowns interest on the bill for over three years, a total of 1507 Crowns. He was paid finally. The Committee also paid \$180 import duty on the marble, June 15, 1818. (Baltimore City Archives, 1819, #411)

Capellano went right to work. He was paid \$500 on May 5, 1819 (canceled check in the Maryland Historical Society), "one Certificate of City Stock" worth \$1200 on March 31, 1820, and on September 25 "paid in full of all accounts," for the amount of \$1,373.77. (Baltimore City Archives, 1821, #937) But this may not have been the entire payment, since the statue was not raised to the summit until September 12, 1822.

Godefroy returned to Europe in 1819. The third stage may have been planned without his knowledge; that is, the pavement base and iron railings which do not appear in his drawing. In 1823 the Superintendents of the Monument reported that this work was under way. Later they explained that the base, with its marble posts and chain, and the fence are "not only ornamental, but indispensably necessary for its protection against the carelessness of carters, draymen and all carriage drivers." (Baltimore City Archives, 1825, #105, a printed report on completion of the monument)

B. Sources of Historical Information:

The Battle Monument is thoroughly documented. The chief manuscript sources are in the Baltimore City Archives, calendared along with other documents but not indexed separately. The Maryland Historical Society has a few documents. The Peale Museum, and also the Enoch Pratt Free Library and Maryland Historical Society, have all the relevant prints and photographs. There are no known original drawings. The engraving by Tanner from the drawing by Godefroy, included in this report, may be considered as the only architect's

rendering. There is some mystery concerning this engraving. The legend reads "Max. Godefroy Esq. P.A. etc. invenit & delin. 1815" and "Engraved by B. Tanner" and "Published by S. C. Atkinson for the Casket." However, the Maryland Historical has a copy which does not bear the latter line. In the bills for the early work on the monument (Baltimore City Archives, 1816, #558, copy included under Part I,C of this report) there is an entry "H. Friefal engraving plate \$13.50" The Casket was first published in 1826, but Tanner was in the engraving business in Philadelphia from 1799. I believe that the plate was engraved from a drawing by Godefroy, now lost, and published separately about 1816, then the plate was reused for the Casket in 1826.

The chief printed accounts are:

Robert L. Alexander, "The Public Memorial and Godefroy's Battle Monument," in the Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians, Vol. XVII, March 1958.

Richard H. Howland and Eleanor P. Spencer, The Architecture of Baltimore (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), pp. 42-43, and plate #26.

William Sener Rusk, Art in Baltimore (Baltimore, 1924), pp. 10-13.

Niles Weekly Register, Vol. VIII, March, September, 1815, pp. 55 and 158 (copies included under Part I,C of this report).

None of these accounts include the detail which the monument's importance deserves to have recorded in the Historic American Buildings Survey. A full history, drawn from manuscript sources, has been presented in Part I,A of this report.

C. Supplemental Material:

1. The following is quoted from Niles' Weekly Register, Vol. VIII, #4, March 25, 1815, p. 55:

WAR EVENTS: or, things incidental to the late war

MISCELLANEOUS

By the Committee of Vigilance and Safety

To the inhabitants of the city and precincts of Baltimore.--
The return of peace having terminated the active duties of the committee of vigilance and safety, its members are now desirous of preparing a suitable tribute of respect to the memory of our brave but unfortunate fellow citizens who fell in defence of this city, on the memorable 12th and 13th September last, and have accordingly unanimously resolved as follows:

- 1st. That a MONUMENT be erected in a place to be hereafter designated by the committee, within the city or precincts of Baltimore.

2nd. That the thanks of the committee be and they are hereby presented to Maximilian Godefroy, esq. for his patriotic and voluntary offer, gratuitously, to prepare designs for the inspection of the committee, and to superintend the execution of the one of their choice.

3. That the three designs presented by Mr. Godefroy are entitled to, and receive the approbation of the committee, and the one that is denominated by him Facial (sic) be and is hereby adopted.

4. That the unexpended funds of the committee of vigilance and safety, be and the same are hereby appropriated to the foregoing object.

5. That in aid of this fund, a subscription paper be deposited at the mayor's office on Monday the 3rd of April next--and that it remain there until the 4th day of July following, and that no person be allowed to subscribe more than five dollars.

6th. That the names of subscribers, but not the sums subscribed, be published on the Saturday of each week until the subscription be closed.

7th. That the corner stone be laid on the 12th September next, that there be then a grand procession--that the relatives of the deceased be invited to attend, and that a suitable address be delivered on the occasion.

8th. That the original subscription paper carefully enveloped for its preservation, be deposited within the corner stone, and that a copy thereof be filed with the register of the city.

9th. That Mr. James A. Buchanan, Richard Frisby, Henry Payson, Samuel Hollingsworth and Joseph Jamieson be and they are hereby specially charged with the execution of the foregoing resolutions.

EDWARD JOHNSON

Chairman of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety

2. The following is quoted from Niles' Weekly Register, Vol. VIII, #9, April 29, 1815, p. 158:

DESCRIPTION OF THE MONUMENT

To the memory of the Citizens who fell in defence of Baltimore, on the twelfth and thirteenth of September, eighteen hundred and fourteen.

The deep interest which must be excited by a monument, the design of which is so honorable to the feelings which

gave it birth, and the brave men to whom it is to be dedicated, make it desirable that the public should be enabled to form a correct idea of the fabric which the city of Baltimore has so honorably resolved to erect to the memory of those citizens who fell nobly fighting in defence of their country.

Mr. Maximillian (sic) Godefroy, informed of the intentions of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety, offered three plans for this most laudable purpose--The first was a simple Obelisk of Verd Antique, (green antique) marble, ornamented with bronze--The second, a Sarcophagus, or rather, a Cenotaph, in the antique style, adorned with appropriate bass (sic) reliefs; the length of each was to have been 39 feet, in allusion to the 39 years of American independence--That which the committee has chosen is entirely allegorical, and consists of three parts.

1st. A square base of stones, simply rusticated, of sepulchral antique form. It is composed of 18 layers of stone, in allusion to the 18 states. Each front will be decorated with a door, in the antique style, like that of the temple of Vesta at Tivoli. They will be shut with tablets of black marble, each bearing an inscription.

2nd. Above the first base will be a second base, square also, each angle of which will be adorned with a Griffin, the symbol of immortality. By giving the head of the Griffin the form of an Eagle, it will have the character of the emblem of the United States. A circular Fasus (sic), in marble, 18 feet high, will rise from the socle, as a symbol of the Union. On the fillets of the Fasus (sic) will be inscribed the names of those men whom valor and gratitude have thus immortalized.

It is from this principal and characteristic part of the monument, and from the Latin word Fascia (in plain English, a bundle of rods) that the ingenious author has elegantly designated this plan under the title of a Fascial Monument.

The lower part of the Fasus (sic) leaves room for a small circular bass (sic) relief, which will represent the bombardment of the Fort and the engagement at North Point.

3d. The Fasus (sic) will be crowned with a marble figure, representing either the United States or one emblematical of the city of Baltimore. The face will be turned towards the bay. In one hand will be an antique rudder, the symbol of navigation; and in the other a laurel crown, the symbol of glory. Beside her will be the Eagle of the United States.

The monument will be raised on three steps, in allusion to the duration of the war; and at the four angles of the pavement which is to surround it, will be placed, instead of posts, four cannons of brass or bronze, from the mouths of which a ball will appear to be issuing. The execution of the statue, which is to be 7 or 8 feet high, will be entrusted to the chizel (sic) of one of the first masters of Europe, in order that it may be every way worthy of the object--a classical and dignified commemoration of the bravery, the virtue, and the gratitude of the citizens of Baltimore.

3. The excerpts quoted below were taken from Mss., Baltimore City Archives, 1816, document #558:

Statement of Funds for the Battle Monument (n.d.)
Subscribed with Mr. Hargrove & at the Library

	to 14th July, 15	\$ 3,786.50	
do.	by the Hussars	1,000	
do.	with James Martin	783	
do.	with Tudor James	2,076	
do.	Jno. Hargrove to 20 Decr 1815	87	
do.	by the Fencibles	1,000	
do.	from South America	63	
do.	by the Independent Blues	1,000	
do.	by the United Volunteers	1,000	
	amt subscriptions		10,795.50
Balance of the funds from the Committee of V & S.			<u>5,869.29</u>
	Dollars		16,664.79
Commn allowed to James Martin		35	
do do to T James		65	
loss on the Sale of \$230 of foreign notes		23	
Counterfeit		10	
Amount of uncollected subscriptions		<u>143</u>	
			<u>276</u>
	Amt. received by the treasurer		16,388.79

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Payments made by the Treasurer (excerpts, collated, not verbatim)
(for promotion purposes)

Allen & Hill "for advertising" (The Federal Republican)	\$25.50
Munroe & Norvell "advertising" (The Patriot)	33.50
(for the dedication ceremonies on September 12, 1815)	
Joseph Jamieson "for powder"	165.00
Aaron Levering "powder"	110.00
Hugh Allen "cartridges"	48.62
Norris & Martin "powder"	23.19
John Finley "Monumental Car"	231.73
(for preliminary work, scaffolding etc.)	
Carr & Hush "blockmakers"	25.07
W. Chalmers "rope"	166.10

James Corrie "carpenter"	234.82
C. Constable "lumber"	333.66
House & Gillingham "lumber"	19.50
W.T. Athey "scaffolding"	100.00
(monument materials and construction)	
S. Smith & Buchanan "on account" (for imported marble)	3,500.00
J. & T. Berry "for Brick"	184.59
John McLane "blacksmith"	46.00
Joshua F. Batchelor "Iron work"	103.79
Adam Clackner "stone"	318.00
W. T. Athey "stone work" (actually, bricklaying)	213.31
J. G. Neal & Co. (stone work) (actually, John G. Neale and Baughman & Hore, associated on the project)	5,142.00
H. Friefal (?) "engraving plate"	13.50
M. Godefroy "on acct."	300.00
Neal, Wills & Cole (?)	16.00
(total expenditures, thus far \$8,779.97)	

(NOTE: This is only about half of the cost of the first stage of building the monument. Neal, Baughman & Hore were to receive about \$5,000 more, and so on. See text for further discussion.)

Compiled by Wilbur Harvey Hunter, Jr.
Director, The Peale Museum
Baltimore, Maryland
November 1959

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. Condition of Fabric: The Battle Monument has not been altered since completion. There is evidence of cracking in the stone and wear. It should be stabilized at once.

B. Detailed Description:

1. Setting: The Battle Monument was erected in the old Court House Square in the center of North Calvert Street and near its intersection with Fayette Street. Once a residential square with a modest Court House at one corner, it is now only a wide part of the street with towering buildings on all sides. The west side of the square is occupied with a huge Classical Court House of 1897; the east holds the equally large Post Office of 1929. A traffic light standard is directly south of the monument, and the space behind the monument is used for parking automobiles.

Recently, the Planning Council of the Greater Baltimore Committee, a private organization with much influence, has recommended that the parking be eliminated and a small landscaped oasis be placed behind the monument. An earlier recommendation by another group to move the monument was vehemently attacked. This site is considered sacrosanct by many people of the city.

2. Structure: In general, the monument is of two kinds of marble facing. The interiors of the podium and base are apparently filled with brick. The subsurface foundation is not known, but seems firm. From bottom to top the monument consists of the following elements:

a. A platform whose top is about three inches above street grade at the southwest corner and about thirty inches at the northeast corner. This was originally a pavement conforming to the grade, but the grade is altered since. It is composed of granite curbs, rounded at the corners, with a concrete pavement surface. Originally it was paved with brick. Rising from the pavement are twelve marble posts between which is stretched an iron anchor chain of reinforced links. The chain is probably original. The four corner posts were adapted to hold gas street lamps at some point and have iron caps and show evidence of the gas pipes.

b. The monument base rises above the pavement about thirty inches. It is square and faced and topped with marble slabs. The sides have three panels. The lower edge of the top slab has a simple molding. The corners of the base appear to be solid blocks. At each corner on low plinths sit bronze facsimile cannon pointing upwards with hemispheres closing the muzzles. From their condition they appear to be a low grade bronze, near to brass. Between the cannon is a fence of iron composed of palings of darts or outsized arrows. Each dart has a bronze or brass point, and the bottom of the darts are capped with a bronze (or brass) rounded terminal. There are two intermediate posts on each side which are made of bundles of the same darts bound with iron strip fillets in the manner of a fasces. Near the top and bottom of the palings is an iron stretcher. At several points the fence rests on iron balls.

On the south side of the base is a bronze plaque with the following inscription: "This monument/ was erected by the citizens of Baltimore under the management of the Committee of Vigilance and Safety/ in honor of the gallant defenders of this city and nation who fell in the Battle of North Point/ and during the bombardment of Fort McHenry, September 12 and 13 1814/ The corner-stone was laid on the first anniversary of the battle, September 12 1815/ by/ Edward Johnson, Mayor * Maj. Gen. Samuel Smith * Brig. Gen. John Stricker * Lieut. Col. George Armistead/ A model for the occasion was executed by John Finley and Rembrandt Peale. The Statue representing the city of Baltimore was raised to the summit September 12 1822/ The design of the monument was the gift of J. Maximilian M. Godefroy, a French emigre, and the carving executed in Italian marble by Signor Antonio Capellano, late first sculptor of the Court of Spain/ This monument occupies the site of the first Court House, where the Declaration of Independence was publicly read July 29 1776/ This site was at first selected for Washington Monument the corner-stone of which was laid two months earlier July 4 1815/ The design was adopted as the seal of the city in 1827/ This tablet was here placed by the City of Baltimore on the centenary of the laying of the cornerstone, Defenders' Day 1915/ James H. Preston Mayor"

No original cornerstone is visible. A sketch at the Maryland Historical Society in a manuscript concerning the arrangements for the ceremony in 1815 indicates that the cornerstone is at the southwest corner of the base, probably under the marble facing. Contrary to the sense of the inscription, the cornerstone of the Washington Monument was not laid here, but on Howard's Park, its present site.

c. The podium of the monument is of marble, rusticated and battered, with a false door in each side closed by a slab. The podium rests on a low platform, and there are three steps cut into this platform at each doorway. The podium is essentially Egyptian in style but the carved moldings around the doors are classical. It is finished off by a cavetto cornice of a white marble in which is carved a winged disk emblem over each door and stylized lotus designs. At each corner is a kind of anthemion device.

d. Above the cornice are two stages of slabs. Into the corners of the upper stage are let the bases of the four white marble griffins. The southwest griffin bears the signature, "A. Capellano 1820."

e. Above this are three more stages of slabs of equal size. On the south side at this level in bronze letters is "Battle of North Point 12th September A.D. 1814 and of the Independence of the United States the Thirty-Ninth." On the north side is "Bombardment of Fort McHenry 13th September A.D. 1814 and of the Independence of the United States the Thirty-Ninth."

f. The column of white marble rests on a very low molded foot of the darker marble which sits on the highest stage mentioned above. The column appears to be made in five or six sections resting on each other. Three horizontal joints are clear. The shaft is sculptured to resemble a fasces with a broad band at top and bottom, three narrow decorative bands, and two fillets laced about the central section. On the north and south sides of the lower band are bas reliefs depicting the battles of North Point and Fort McHenry. Above that is a band of fifteen stars; the upper two bands have classical motifs. In bronze letters on the fillets and on the upper broad band are the names of the men who were killed in the actions. No other names appear.

g. On the top of the column is a white marble sculpture group of a female classical figure, a rudder and cannon ball, and an eagle. The figure holds in her right hand a bronze wreath. She faces south.

3. Materials: There are two kinds of marble used in the monument. The white marble mentioned was imported from Italy (see Part I of this report). All the other stone above the pavement appears to be a low grade whitish marble without streaks or figure. There is

only tradition for the statement that it came from the well-known quarries in Baltimore County. Historical information says the doors were closed with "black" marble, but if so, these slabs have weathered oddly. They look as if they were actually painted black. The iron fence and bronze cannon have been painted black, too. Historical evidence shows that a great deal of brick was used in the construction, presumably as the interior fill.

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